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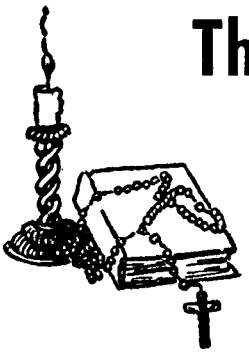

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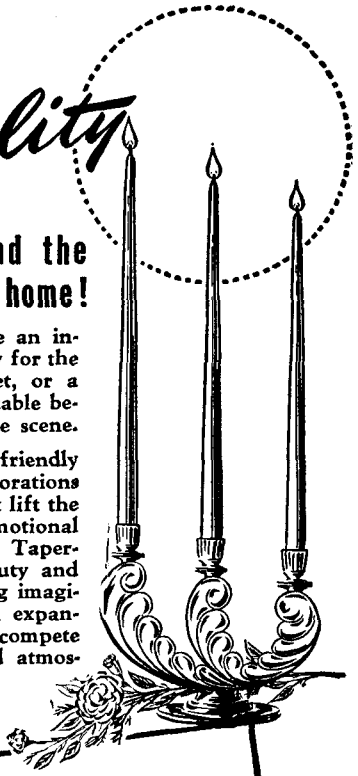

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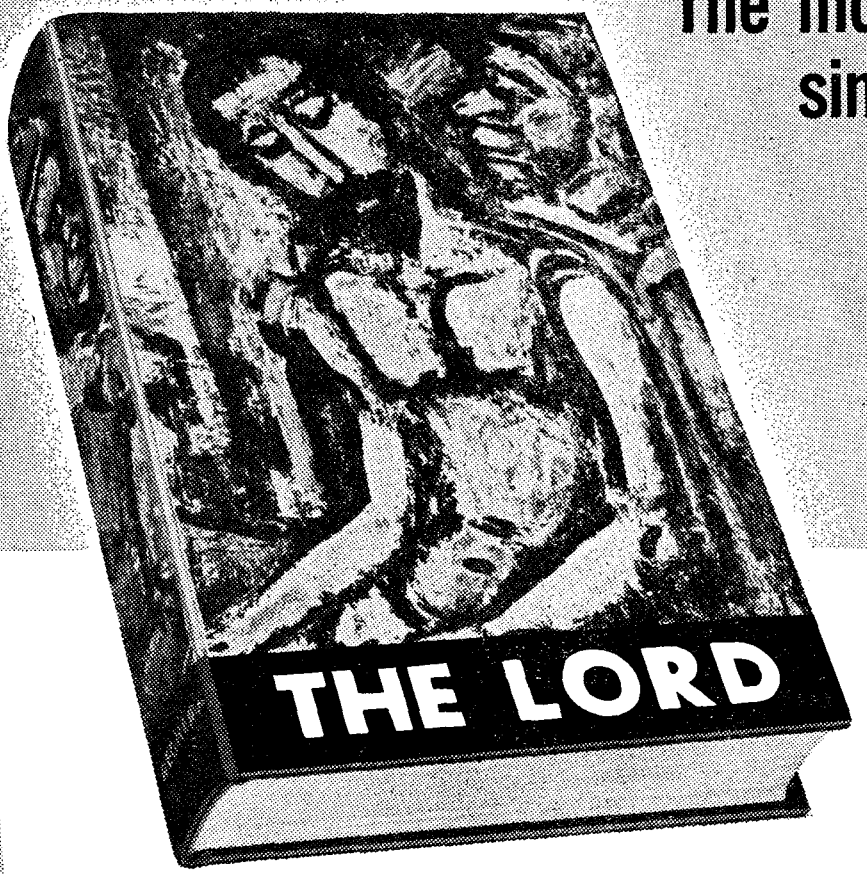

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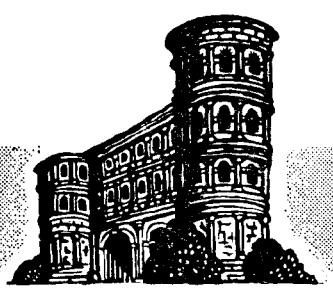

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There are pictures from *Cracks in the Cloister,* full length reviews of the other books mentioned above, and an unpublished poem by Caryll Houselander in the Christmas edition of Sheed & Ward's OWN TRUMPET. To get the Trumpet, free and postpaid, write to Lucy MacGill—all the address you need is

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THE

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week by week

THE TWO MATERIALISMS

IF hedonism may be dignified by the name of a philosophy, then there are indeed two rival materialist philosophies today—hedonism at home and Marxism abroad. Marxist—explicitly atheistic—materialism would seem to enjoy many competitive advantages. To begin with, it has built up a much more complete and coherent body of thought than our native hedonism has. There are a number of other reasons why Marxism makes such headway in the world. It has behind it an able, experienced and powerful political organization which reaches into every country. Its dissemination is a matter of positive Soviet policy.

The individualistic, hedonistic, materialism which has great influence in the West has other drives. It motivates personal and corporate efforts to attain great wealth, economic power and the prestige which results. It is similar to Marxist materialism in its failure to grasp the nature of man and his true end. The American Bishops declare in their recent annual statement that "Materialism is the real enemy at home and abroad."

The fact that Marxism makes such a dynamic impact on the world is due in large measure to the way its tenets respond to current human needs and resentments. The world's colonial areas supply a striking example. The philosophy of the hated Western overseer or entrepreneur has roots in Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham. The system whereby each man assiduously seeks his own economic good has not greatly promoted the general good of the colonial peoples. A Western capitalism symbolic of a predominantly materialistic philosophy has all too often gone in for human exploitation. It is in such an atmosphere that the Marxists come forward with their promises of political independence, land reform, state ownership of the means of industrial production, displacement of the wealthy capitalists: in short, what appears to be full-scale liberation.

When representatives of the West seek to rehabilitate an impoverished land on any scale, material measures of necessity have to be uppermost. Hospitals and public health services need to be set up, roads, dams and bridges built, schools opened, farming methods improved, industries established. Civilization has to have a going material basis.

AT the same time there is an unhappy tendency on the part of technicians and representatives of Western governments to neglect spiritual values. They are representatives of a pluralistic society with a strong secularist bent.

Accordingly, they often prove unequal to grasping the importance of tribal morality, when that is still dominant, or to contributing toward a new religious outlook when ancient traditions have died out as a result of contact with Western civilization. In this latter circumstance indoctrinated native Marxists have a decided advantage, as they present the Revolution as a new religion.

Only the Christian missionary seems able adequately to represent Western spiritual values in these lands. But by the nature of his calling and traditional missionary respect for native cultures he is prevented from serving as an apostle of Western culture, or even of economic or political democracy. If he does all he can to minister to the physical needs he encounters, his primary concern is to spread the good tidings of the Gospel.

In the vast struggle between the Marxists and the West the dynamic materialism of the former benefits greatly from the materialistic approach of official Western representatives. Only here and there do these men and women, and a few "lay auxiliaries" who have chosen to live and labor among the native peoples, bear witness to the spiritual values of our Western heritage.

But the bringing of civilization or a going economy to the various colonial and underdeveloped lands that together account for two-thirds of the whole human family is less a matter of techniques, or of personnel, than it is something much more fundamental. Action follows being. Men act primarily according to what they are. That is one of the

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most disturbing aspects about exaggerated American concern with comforts and material things. Because of this "domestic invasion of materialism," to use the Bishops' phrase, we are in grave danger of weakening from within. Surely if we Americans are to be strong and wise enough to handle our new world responsibilities, we cannot afford to dally with the sort of materialism that has brought so many proud empires to the dust.

DEBATE ON RED CHINA

WHEN the topic, "Resolved, that the United States should extend diplomatic recognition to the Communist government of China" was chosen for this year's intercollegiate debates, one could be sure that a national rumpus would be raised. The topic is "controversial."

And so the rumpus came, quickly. First, certain Catholic voices, in the colleges and in the press, were heard to cry treason and heresy. To argue for such a resolution, they suggested, was equivalent to arguing for the devil himself. Then West Point and Annapolis announced that their students would be forbidden to take any part in it. "It is Department of the Army policy not to have USMA cadets involved in debate on such a controversial subject on which, in any event, national policy has already been established," the Army announced. To take the affirmative side on this question would be tantamount to upholding "the Communist philosophy and party line," the Navy maintained. In view of all this, the Red China topic is being reconsidered.

Perhaps this is no great matter. The nation will not rise or fall, the Administration's policy will not be maintained or altered, as a result of what collegians have to say. Let them debate something less controversial, like tariff regulations. It will make no great difference, in itself.

What does matter, what does make a difference, is the cumulative effect of affairs such as this on our national intelligence and on the opinion of the rest of the world. We do ourselves no service by the conscious, continuing limitation of what we dare talk about, and we do the United States no good by making the country appear senseless, or merely silly, to those who observe it. The idea that to debate diplomatic recognition of Red China is somehow treasonable or heretical is senseless and silly.

This magazine is joined with the overwhelming majority of other Americans in opposing diplomatic recognition of Communist China at this time, or in the foreseeable future. But we do not count our position on this question as an article of American —or of Catholic—faith. We think that this is essentially a prudential question, and we believe that a loyal American or a Catholic in good faith is free to advance a minority view. In fact, the real danger, as we see it, lies, not in debating this issue, but in cutting off all debate on it, in making it seem a forever closed book.

We are therefore happy to note that the Forensic Commission of the National Federation of Catholic College Students has decided, despite the previous Catholic protests, to retain the question of recognizing Red China as a subject for this year's debate tourney. The Commission made this decision after submitting the problem to a theologian, Father Benedict Ashley, O. P., who stated that there is no reason why a Catholic cannot accept the opinion favoring Red China's recognition if he believes this would be a prudent means of defending ourselves better against Communism. Perhaps, with the Catholic Student Federation having led the way, others may now reconsider their ill-advised decision to cut off an essential debate.

NEXT WEEK

T. F. WALKOWICZ and WILLIAM PFAFF write about the effect of nuclear weapons on cold war strategy, and put forward a plan for limiting the use of those weapons—the counter-force strategy:

"A powerful trend towards 'atomic neutralism' exists in many parts of the free world, based on the supposition that, since cities and seaports would be indiscriminately subject to nuclear attack at the outset of a new war, the only protection consists in refusing to arm . . . . if clearly understood and implemented, the counter-force strategy can reverse this trend. The counter-force strategy offers the nations of Europe and Asia realistic means of defense, and a realistic chance of escaping the either/or of devastation or conquest which up to now have seemed their sole, terrible alternatives."

AID FOR MEDICAL SCHOOLS

THE recently installed President of the American College of Surgeons, Dr. Alfred Blalock, wasted no time in plunging into a controversial issue. Dr. Blalock, who is famous as a developer of the "blue baby" operation, began his tenure in office by calling bluntly for Federal and state aid to medical education. His reasons are simple enough. There are, Dr. Blalock said, seventy-nine medical schools in this country; their annual deficit

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amounts to ten million dollars. If the schools are to survive, he said, they must have help.

What Dr. Blalock wants is Federal and state aid for medical schools, accompanied by guaranties of what he called the four medical freedoms—freedom to choose the faculty, freedom to select the student body, freedom to decide what should be taught, and freedom to choose research projects. To insure these freedoms, Dr. Blalock has several suggestions. He thinks, for example, that government aid might be earmarked for building so that endowment income could be left free for other purposes. Or he suggests that government aid might be considered reimbursement to the school for the free medical care given to the needy; this last item, according to Dr. Blalock, amounts to one hundred million dollars a year. These are just suggestions; in general, however, Dr. Blalock's approach differs considerably from that of the American Medical Association, which favors specific governmental grants for buildings and special research programs, but opposes long-term continuing support.

Those best able to judge Dr. Blalock's plan, of course, are the men who are charged with the responsibility of keeping the medical schools going. Certainly, no one wants to see the government exercise control over the content and direction of medical education in this country. But the financial plight of the medical schools is alarmingly real.

We have just enough acquaintance with the difficulties Catholic medical schools have had to be aware of the staggering difficulties their directors have faced over the years. The notable labors of the Jesuits in this regard have largely gone unsung and—something that is, from their point of view, much worse—often unaided. Only by heroic efforts have these schools been able to remain open and maintain their high standards.

Perhaps those responsible for the operation of the medical schools may see in Dr. Blalock's proposals flaws which are not immediately evident to us. We do not know. But we do know that more attention should be paid to the medical schools, and we feel it should be possible to work out a method of support that would render their existence somewhat less precarious.

SEGREGATED SEATS

SEGREGATION of railroad passengers has long been a common practice in Southern states except on through North-South trains. Now an examiner for the Interstate Commerce Commission has recommended that railroads be required to abolish segregated coaches on interstate trains.

New subscriptions continued to flow in during the past week. This current issue provides both a reply card insert and a coupon on page 254 that should serve as a handy means of entering Christmas gift subscriptions. The number of new long-term subscriptions still needed to meet the 30th Anniversary goal for January 1 is 3,044.

The recommendation was made as a result of a complaint brought by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People against a dozen major railroads serving the South. It will now go to the Commission for a ruling, and the whole question may end up in the courts. The Supreme Court has ruled in the past that segregation in dining cars violates the Interstate Commerce Act, which prohibits carriers from subjecting any passenger to "any undue or unreasonable prejudice or disadvantage." But although it refused to overthrow an anti-segregation decision by a lower court in a similar case, the Court has never ruled specifically on the separation of passengers in coaches according to race.

In making his decision, the ICC examiner held that the Supreme Court decision which outlawed segregation in the public schools also has a bearing on the question of railroad segregation. "The disadvantage to a traveler who is assigned accomodations or facilities so designated as to imply his inherent inferiority solely because of his race certainly is unreasonable," he said in his decision. We heartily concur, and hope the courts will do the same.

JUDGE YOUNGDAHL'S POSITION

THIS magazine has never been one of Owen Lattimore's admirers. Long before Senator McCarthy charged that Mr. Lattimore was the chief architect of Soviet policy in this country (a charge on which the Senator said he was willing to stand or fall) The Commonweal condemned Mr. Lattimore's views on our Asian affairs. But we have been concerned, and are concerned now, that Mr. Lattimore, like any other American, be presumed innocent of serious crime until he is proved guilty. We are concerned that he be accorded the full justice of the nation's Constitutional guarantees.

For these reasons we entertained serious doubts of the legality of the Government's original key count against Mr. Lattimore: that he lied when he swore he had not been a Communist "sympathizer," and we felt the cogency of Federal Judge Youngdahl's

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argument when he dismissed this count as too vague to admit of legal proof. For similar reasons we felt recent efforts by the Justice Department to have Judge Youngdahl dismissed as "prejudiced" in Mr. Lattimore's favor were extremely dangerous and we sympathized with the Judge's ruling that these efforts were a "scandalous" attempt to intimidate and influence the courts.

Now the Justice Department has decided not to appeal Judge Youngdahl's ruling, and the Judge, in turn, has demanded either that an appeal be made to the Appellate Court or that a public apology be made to him by the Justice Department. For as the Judge points out, "this is a . . . . hit and run attack which touches any Judge of the United States who hereafter undertakes to hear this case." Judge Youngdahl is right. The Justice Department owes it to the country to adopt one of the two courses he indicates. It started something which cannot end here, whatever embarrassment the Department may face in putting things straight.

THE PEACE MOOD

THE battle over "coexistence" is considerably more than sound and semantics. The word, of course, is one which the Communists are attempting to seize. They place their own meaning on "coexistence" just as they have placed their own meanings on "peace" and "democracy" and "freedom-loving." If it were not devalued by the Communists, coexistence would be a useful and unexceptionable term to describe the condition of nations which are not actively at war.

This explanation is rudimentary stuff, and it is hard to understand how intelligent politicians can have let themselves get into a controversy over such a flexible term. It would be better to throw the word out and start over again. For there are serious questions of policy involved in this debate and they could easily get lost in the clamor about whether or not the word, "coexistence," is Communist property.

Recent months have brought two developments: surface peace in the world and Soviet success in the field of thermonuclear weapons—hydrogen bombs. The Soviet weapons accomplishment made it quite clear that certain military advantages the West has up to now possessed are fast shrinking.

But this sobering series of events in the weapons field has been paralleled by an extraordinary lifting of political clouds: the Indochina war was ostensibly settled; the SEATO pact was signed; the Trieste problem was solved; the Middle-Eastern situation was improved; and the grand climax to the extraordinary summer's accomplishments came with marvelous pre-election timing in the signing of the agreement to rearm Germany.

These diplomatic accomplishments played a large role in the American Congressional campaign. President Eisenhower, it was argued, was the man who kept us out of war. Senator Knowland, however, was not so impressed with the diplomacy as he was with the weapons crisis; he came to fear that at a time when real danger was increasing, the United States was succumbing to over-optimism.

We must say that some of Mr. Eisenhower's recent remarks have justified Mr. Knowland's anxiety. The progress in settling intra-Western problems has been admirable. But who would say that the Geneva settlement was satisfactory? Who would argue that South Viet Nam is not in imminent danger of sinking into the Communist system? Who can pretend that the arrival in North Viet Nam of three new Communist divisions—two of them armored—does not have the most serious implications? Who can look with indifference at the spectacle of thousands of Catholic and Buddhist Vietnamese risking their lives in frantic attempts to escape to the South? Who would argue that we are not in a very risky position in the continuing and ominous Chinese civil war? And most of all, who can blind himself to the calamitous danger inherent in the nuclear weapons situation?

Yet let us quote Joseph C. Harsch of the *Christian Science Monitor,* writing on the present state of mind of the Administration: "The Eisenhower Administration is committed to the proposition that there is more, not less, peace in the world . . . . the Treasury, the Bureau of the Budget, and other economy-minded branches of government in Washington . . . . insist on their share of the new 'peace' atmosphere. Their share includes reductions in dollar commitments to foreign countries, no matter how essential those countries might be in time of war. . . ."

Mr. Knowland has sensed this relaxation and is fighting it. The kind of foreign policy he stands for is one which this magazine rejects: withdrawal from the UN, threats of massive retaliation, "going it alone," etc.; but we are only slightly less afraid of the consequences of the "peace" mood in Washington than we are of Mr. Knowland's going-it-alone recommendations.

The United States is presented here with a rather basic question: Can a nation, in a state of international tension such as the present, maintain itself in permanent alert? Can it live indefinitely in crisis? Or is the present mood of the Administration an inevitable turn of the wheel? Mr. Knowland seems determined to find out.

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Morning in Wales

"I WALKED THROUGH THE STREETS LIKE A STRANGER COME OUT OF THE SEA."

DYLAN THOMAS

QUITE early one morning in the winter in Wales, by the sea that was lying down still and green as grass after a night of tar-black howling and rolling, I went out of the house, where I had come to stay for a cold unseasonable holiday, to see if it was raining still, if the outhouse had been blown away, potatoes, shears, rat-killer, shrimpnets, and tins of rusty nails aloft on the wind, and if all the cliffs were left. It had been such a ferocious night that someone in the smoky ship-pictured bar had said he could feel his tombstone shaking even though he was not dead or, at least, was moving; but the morning shone as clear and calm as one always imagines tomorrow will shine.

The sun lit the sea-town, not as a whole—from topmost down—reproving zinc-roofed chapel to empty but for rats and whispers grey warehouse on the harbor, but in separate bright pieces. There, the quay shouldering out, nobody on it now but the gulls and the capstans like small men in tubular trousers. Here, the roof of the police station, black as a helmet, dry as a summons, sober as Sunday. There, the splashed church, with a cloud in the shape of a bell poised above it, ready to drift and ring. Here, the chimneys of the pink-washed pub, the pub that was waiting for Saturday night as an overjolly girl waits for sailors.

The town was not yet awake. The milkman lay still, lost in the clangor and music of his Welsh-spoken dreams, the wish-fulfilled tenor voices, more powerful than Caruso's, sweeter than Ben Davies', thrilling past Cloth Hall and Manchester House up to the frosty hills.

The town was not yet awake. Babies in upper bedrooms of salt-white houses dangling over water, or of bow-windowed villas squatting prim in neatly treed but unsteady hill-streets, worried the light with their half-in-sleep cries. Miscellaneous retired sea-captains emerged for a second from deeper waves than ever tossed their boats, then drowned again, going down, down into a perhaps Mediterranean-blue cabin of sleep, rocked to the sea-beat of their years. Landladies, shawled and bloused and aproned with sleep in the curtained, bombasined-black of their once spare rooms, remembered their loves, their bills, their visitors dead, decamped, or buried in English deserts till the trumpet of next expensive August roused them again to the world of holiday rain, dismal cliff and sand seen through the weeping windows of front parlors, tasseled tablecloths, stuffed pheasants, ferns in pots, fading photographs of the bearded and censorious dead, autograph albums with a look of limp and colorless beribboned hair, lolling out between the thick black boards.

The town was not yet awake. Birds sang in eaves, bushes, trees, on telegraph wires, rails, fences, spars and wet masts, not for love or joy, but to keep other birds away. The landlords in feathers disputed the right of even the flying light to descend and perch.

The town was not yet awake, and I walked through the streets like a stranger come out of the sea, shrugging off weed and wave and darkness with each step, or like an inquisitive shadow, determined to miss nothing: not the preliminary tremor in the throat of the dawn-saying cock or the first whirring nudge of arranged time in the belly of the alarm clock on the trinketed chest of drawers under the knitted text and the done-by-hand water colors of Porthcawl or Trinidad.

I WALKED past the small sea-spying windows, behind whose trim curtains lay mild-mannered men and women not yet awake and, for all I could know, terrible and violent in their dreams. In the head of Miss Hughes "The Cosy" clashed the cymbals of an Eastern court. Eunuchs struck gongs the size of Bethesda Chapel. Sultans with voices fiercer than visiting preachers demanded a most un-Welsh dance. Everywhere there glowed and rayed the colors of the small, slate-gray woman's dreams: purple, magenta, ruby, sapphire, emerald, vermilion, honey. But I could not believe it. She knitted in her tidy sleep-world a beige woolen shroud with "Thou Shalt Not" on the bosom.

I could not imagine Cadwallader Davies the grocer, in his near-to-waking dream, riding on horseback, two-gunned and Cody-bold, through the cactused

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This is a hitherto unpublished work of the late Welsh poet which will be included in Quite Early One Morning, to be published later this month by New Directions.

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prairies. He added, he subtracted, he receipted, he filed a prodigious account with a candle dipped in dried egg.

What big seas of dreams ran in the Captain's sleep? Over what blue-whaled waves did he sail through a rainbow-hail of flying fishes to the music of Circe's swinish island? Do not let him be dreaming of dividends and bottled beer and onions.

Someone was snoring in one house. I counted ten savagely indignant grunts-and-groans like those of a pig in a model and mudless farm, which ended with a window-rattler, a washbasin-shaker, a trembler of tooth glasses, a waker of dormice. It thundered with me up to the chapel railings, then brassily vanished.

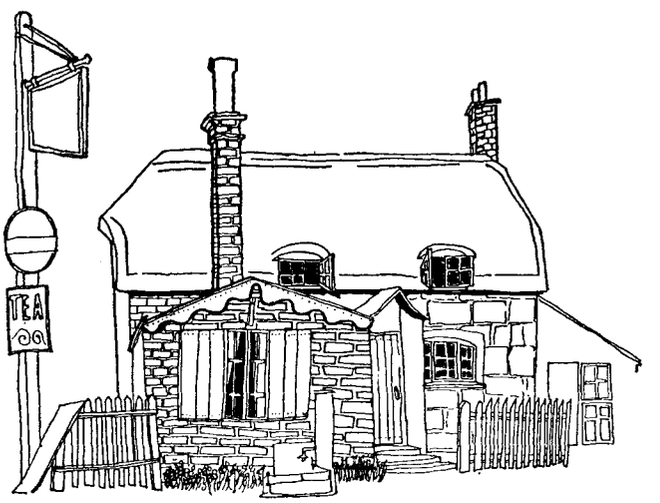
The chapel stood grim and gray, telling the day there was to be no nonsense. The chapel was not asleep; it never cat-napped nor nodded nor closed its long cold eye. I left it telling the morning off and a seagull hung, rebuked, above it.

And climbing down again, and up out of the town, I heard the cocks crow from hidden farmyards, from old roosts above waves, where fabulous seabirds might sit and cry, "Neptune!" And a faraway clock struck from another church, in another village, in another universe, though the wind blew the time away. And I walked in a timeless morning past a row of white cottages, almost expecting that an ancient man with a great beard and an hourglass and a scythe under his nightdressed arm might lean from a window and ask *me* the time. I would have told him: "Arise, old counter of the heartbeats of albatrosses, and wake the cavernous sleepers of the town to a dazzling new morning." I would have told him: "You unbelievable father of Eva and Dai Adam, come out, old chicken, and stir up the winter morning with your spoon of a scythe." I would have told him—I would have scampered like a scalded ghost, over the cliffs and down into the bilingual sea.

Who lived in those cottages? I was a stranger to the sea-town, fresh or stale from the city where I worked for my bread and butter, wishing it were laver-bread and country salty butter yoke-yellow. Fishermen, certainly; no painters but of boats, no man-dressed women with shooting-sticks and sketch-books and voices like macaws, to paint the reluctant heads of critical and sturdy natives who posed by the pint, against the chapel-dark sea which would be made more blue than the Bay of Naples, though shallower.

I walked on to the cliff path again, the town behind and below waking up now so very slowly; I stopped, and turned, and looked. Smoke from one chimney. The cobbler's, I thought, but from that distance it may have been the chimney of the retired male-nurse who had come to live in Wales after many years' successful wrestling with the mad rich of southern England. He was not liked. He measured you for a strait-jacket, carefully, with his eye. He saw you bounce from rubber walls like a sorbo ball. No behavior surprised him. Many people of the town found it hard to resist leering at him suddenly around the corner, or convulsively dancing, or pointing with laughter and devilish good humor to invisible dogfights, merely to prove to him that they were "normal."

Smoke from another chimney now: they were burning their last night's dreams: up from a chimney came a long-haired wraith, like an old politician: somebody had been dreaming of the Liberal party. But no, the smoky figure wove, attenuated into a refined and precise gray comma: someone had been dreaming of reading Charles Morgan.



OH! the town was waking now and I heard distinctly, insistent over the slow-speaking sea, the voices of the town blown up to me. And some of the voices said:

I am Miss May Hughes "The Cosy," a lonely lady,
waiting in her house by the nasty sea,
waiting for her husband and pretty baby
to come home at last from wherever they may be.

I am Captain Tiny Evans, my ship was the *Kidwelly,*
and Mrs. Tiny Evans has been dead for many a year.
Poor Captain Tiny all alone, the neighbors whisper.
but I like it all alone and I hated her.

Clara Tawe Jenkins, "Madame" they call me,
an old contralto with her dressing gown on.
And I sit at the window and I sing to the sea,
for the sea doesn't notice that my voice has gone.

Parchedig Thomas Evans making morning tea,
very weak tea, too, you mustn't waste a leaf.

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Every morning making tea in my house by the sea,
I am troubled by one thing only, and that's—
Belief.

Open the curtains, light the fire, what are servants for?
I am Mrs. Ogmore-Pritchard and I want another snooze.
Dust the china, feed the canary, sweep the drawing-room floor.
And before you let the sun in, mind he wipes his shoes.

I am only Mr. Griffiths, very shortsighted, B.A., Aber.
As soon as I finish my egg I must shuffle off to school.

Oh, patron saint of teachers, teach me to keep order,
and *forget* those words on the blackboard—
"Griffiths Bat is a fool."

Do you hear that whistling?—It's me, I am Phoebe,
the maid at the King's Head, and I am whistling like a bird.
Someone spilt a tin of pepper in the tea.
There's twenty for breakfast, and I'm not going to say a word.

Thus some of the voices of a cliff-perched town at the far end of Wales moved out of sleep and darkness into the newborn, ancient and ageless morning, moved and were lost.

Somerset Maugham

"THE TIME SEEMS ESPECIALLY RIPE TO CONSIDER THIS WISE OLD LITERARY CAT."

SEYMOUR KRIM

"There are no real pleasures without real needs."
—Voltaire

NOW that W. Somerset Maugham is "on the wing," as he himself has put it, after having devoted more than half a century to writing fiction in its strict or Webster's Unabridged sense—"the branch of prose literature comprising works of imaginative narration"—the time seems especially ripe to consider this wise old literary cat, who has had at least nine lives in his popularity as a writer. Not only has Maugham had an unusually long and productive career—fifty-seven years in print and co-holder with Thomas Mann of longevity honors among living novelists; his work itself has persisted among readers of all tastes with a perversity almost equal to that of Maugham himself, refusing to lie down and die despite innumerable burial services.

For years Somerset Maugham has been a curious literary phenomenon, the hero of the common-reader but also the somewhat begrudged Disturber of the Peace for many serious-minded people with exacting standards. This latter group enjoys his stories, recognizes in them certain truths about what Maugham calls (with deliberate triteness) "human nature," but doesn't know exactly how to deal with the author as far as ribbons and ratings go. The fact that Maugham is a good friend of the Duchess of Windsor, received $10,000 a story for many years from the *Cosmopolitan*, and is used by shallow critics to scoff at serious accomplishments in literature, makes him a suspicious figure and makes the responsible literary man hesitant about praising what he likes in Maugham's work.

Our better critics of this generation, although they may have enjoyed Maugham in private, have all but ignored him for public comment; and in England homage from the highbrows has been restricted to Cyril Connolly—"Maugham is one of the few great writers of our time"—and Elizabeth Bowen. We find that intellectuals who are also novelists or short-story writers have good reason to think more highly of Maugham than the academic critic who has never labored to create fiction. Maugham is close to being a master of the art of story-telling, and it is hard to conceive of a modern fiction writer of any school who does not appreciate this mastery, limited as it is.

Limitation is a key word for Maugham. His stories and non-fiction are readable precisely because of their self-imposed limitations, or regard for form: when horror occurs in a Maugham story it is doubly effective because the amenities have been strictly observed until the scream is heard or the body discovered. Blood on a stiff white shirt is more dramatic than on

Mr. Krim is the editor of *Manhattan*, an anthology of short stories published earlier this year.

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a sport shirt, and it is this very contrast which has always contained meaning for Maugham. Being an artist, the shirts in his stories are boiled whiter than white to heighten the wound which lies in waiting; but being first a man, it was necessary that Maugham's sense of drama be shaped by an environment which was sharply aware of formal conventions, so that every breach of "good form" would be charged with emotional meaning.

WHEN he decided at the age of twenty-three to become a writer William Somerset Maugham was breaking with more than a hundred years of family tradition; he was aware of the 'daring' aspect of his becoming a writer with a century of lawyers behind him. The rootedness of the Law in Maugham's family is well-symbolized by the fact that his grandfather had been one of the founders of England's Incorporated Law Society, and a long list of his legal works can be found today in the British Museum. Maugham's father was also a lawyer, and interestingly enough, in view of his son's well-known passion, a great traveler as well. Robert Ormand Maugham had been to Turkey, Greece, Asia Minor and Morocco—as far as Fez, a region few nineteenth century Englishmen had the nerve to investigate—before settling down to become solicitor to the British Embassy in Paris. The Maugham apartment on the Avenue Antin was filled with travel books and trophies from distant countries: Tanagra statuettes, Rhodes ware and Turkish daggers set in hilts of richly decorated silver. It was in this atmosphere of both foreign exotica and substantial English professionalism—both of which figure in Maugham's work—that the author was born on January 25th, 1874, the youngest of six sons.

His mother, generally agreed to have been a beautiful woman, was some twenty years younger than her husband. Delicate and consumptive, she died at the age of thirty-eight; her husband survived her by only two years, leaving his youngest son, then ten, under the guardianship of an uncle. From birth Maugham had been cared for by French nurses and had attended a French school; but after the death of his parents, before he was sent to England to live with his guardian, it was logically decided to prepare him for the new life by teaching him English, which he barely knew. He was withdrawn from school and tutored privately by the English clergyman attached to the Embassy. The cleric's method of teaching his pupil English was to have him read aloud the police-court news in the London *Standard*—a peculiar form of education for a ten-year-old orphan and one, his detractors might say, which made a lasting impression.

In England the young Maugham went to live in Whitstable, where his uncle-guardian was vicar of the local church—the very one who receives his just deserts in both *Of Human Bondage,* and *Cakes and Ale;* one can see at this point why clergymen figure so prominently in Maugham's work, for his uncle loomed above his youth with "Thou Shalt Nots" which frightened the young boy and which were forever joined in Maugham's mind with what he considered to be the hypocrisy of formal religion. The pathetic missionary in *Ra.* · who finally yields to the prostitute after trying to convert her, and then cuts his own

throat, can logically be seen as Maugham's imaginative revenge on a class which he has always gone out of his way to bait: the professional English clergyman who, knowing neither Kierkegaard nor Freud and caring less, left a permanent scar on his young personality.

Maugham did not remain long in England; to this day, some sixty years later, he has always found it uncomfortable. At the age of thirteen he was withdrawn from King's School in Canterbury after it was discovered that he had inherited his mother's tendency to tuberculosis. After his health improved "his increasing shyness toward English people," as he has put it, made him long to return abroad. He finally persuaded his uncle, who apparently had charge of the trust fund left to Maugham by his father, to allow him to finish the preparation for Cambridge at Heidelberg; he spent approximately a year in the German university town, reveling in the freedom of its intellectual atmosphere and gaining there his first taste for philosophy—which was to become with the years the greatest of his hobbies and, along with Martinis, his substitute for religion.

It had always been assumed that Maugham would follow family tradition and enter the law. But three of his older brothers were already practicing when the time came for him to choose a career; this gave Maugham a good rationalization for backing out of something he didn't want to do. Already secretly coveting the idea of becoming a writer, he turned down his uncle's suggestions that he enter the Church or the Civil Service, and in the autumn of 1892 became a medical student at St. Thomas' Hospital in London. He was not motivated by any great desire to become a doctor, as he has explained in *The Summing Up*, but rather by the opportunity to live in London

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on his own and "see life." Limiting his studies to just the cramming necessary to scrape by, Maugham spent the rest of his time in an arduous schedule of reading and writing until he reached the age where he could give consultation in the hospital's out-patient department. The day-by-day drama there so engrossed him that he drew upon this material for his first novel, *Liza of Lambeth*.

When Maugham had decided in his tenacious way to become a writer, he approached it the way other members of his family had applied themselves to Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. As he has said several times, he was not in his own eyes a "born writer," and his method for surmounting that handicap was to go to the British Museum, on off-hours from the hospital, and literally learn how to write by copying out lists of words, phrases and narrative bits from the Bible, Jeremy Taylor, Swift and Dryden. Behind this industrious self-help program was not only Maugham's desire for literary success, but also the need to insure his independence. His unwillingness to be dependent upon an unsympathetic guardian increased his desire to earn a living by writing as soon as he could.

For Maugham the pursuit of both the dollar and the muse was not the impossible daydream that has ruined many other writers. The reason is twofold: it is impossible to avoid seeing from the explicit use Maugham makes of himself in both his fiction and non-fiction that "to be liked" was a strong need of his in many-ways narcissistic personality, as it was, in grander dimensions, of Proust's. Secondly, Maugham's own tastes in literature, while refined by constant and varied reading, were essentially popular, and as we

know, the books a writer enjoys reading he tries to emulate. Thus by doing the kind of writing that was to satisfy his own inner needs he was to satisfy those of others—a self-respectful desire to be popular begets popularity with respect.

AT the age of twenty-three young Maugham's medical studies and literary ambitions resulted in simultaneous success when he had *Liza of Lambeth*, published just before he passed the final examination which qualified him as a physician. *Liza* was widely reviewed and so impressed the head of the Obstetric Clinic at St. Thomas' that he offered Maugham an appointment at the hospital, quite a plum for a fledgling doctor. But acceptance of his first novel by the first publisher to whom it was submitted, plus good reviews, clinched Maugham's determination to pursue writing full-time. As soon as he had been formally graduated from St. Thomas', he collected his royalties and went off to Spain to work on a new book—leaving medicine behind him for good. The royalties of *Liza* which gave Maugham such a fine swell of independence amounted to all of eighty-one dollars.

Settling in Seville, the young author turned his attention to the theater. Once again his practical shrewdness influenced his decision. His forte was dialogue, while description cost him much unrewarding effort. He decided, however, that his best chance of becoming a successful London dramatist was first to establish his reputation as an author of books—an odd logic according to the requirements of our Broadway stage, but one apparently consistent with the London theater of that time. After publishing two more semi-potboiler novels and a volume of short stories, quickly written and undistinguished, Maugham began a ten years' labor to become a successful playwright. And in 1907, although his plays had been consistently refused by Producer Charles Frohman and others, Maugham suddenly found himself a "celebrity" —with four plays running in London's West End at once. The plays themselves, including "Lady Frederick," "Mrs. Dot" and "Jack Straw," need not detain us; Maugham himself has compared the characteristic London drama of that period to journalism, finding it only of momentary interest or amusement. What is important is the lasting effect that Maugham's success as a dramatist was to have on his fiction. (It should be pointed out, though, that at least two of Maugham's plays, "The Constant Wife" and "Our Betters," are extremely well-constructed, witty and above all playable comedies of manners, and have kept their appeal despite the datedness of their setting. They resemble Restoration comedy in their deliberate artificiality, which does not date in the same way that much naturalistic drama does.)

From the first day he began to write, Maugham stood apart from his other English contemporaries in the popular novel—men like Arnold Bennett, Hugh Walpole, H. G. Wells and others. His exposure to French language and culture in the most formative years gave him different esthetic ideals from Englishmen who were then writing the rich-puddinged novel, modeled on Dickens. Every reader of Maugham's mature work knows that much of its appeal lies in its Continental attitude, where the Borgias and Racines have joined

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hands to give Maugham some of their seasoned urbanity and teach him cunning. But what the reader may not suspect is that Maugham's reliance upon calculated dramatic effects in his fiction is not so much Free Will in operation as Necessity. "We write as we can, not as we'd like," says Maugham, and he is his own proof. Anyone who reads his early novels, such as *Liza of Lambeth* and *Mrs. Craddock,* is at once aware that they lack the impact of multifarious life which distinguishes the first works of major novelists like Balzac, Dostoyevsky, and Theodore Dreiser. From the beginning it is clear that Maugham does not have a husky imagination, nor can he afford to squander fictional matter in any lavish way. It is here that his knowledge and success in the theater enabled him to squeeze the last drop from his talent.

From the theater Maugham learned the unfailing effectiveness of the tightly plotted scene, where restrictions of time, space and the audience's ear, rather then the reader's eye, demand that each minute count in terms of action. He had to compress each situation to its dramatic heart, which meant economy of writing and pointed presentation. And the most important result of his theatrical experience—he learned a sure knowledge of his audience, paid for with the hard coin of the box-office: how to lead it, deceive it, and surprise it. In the best and most characteristic of his novels, *Cakes and Ale* and *The Moon and Sixpence,* and in his many collections of expertly written short stories, Maugham was to write "theater" in the form of prose. Like all technique which is basic to the stage but isn't absolutely necessary for fiction, an acute awareness of the audience shapes each of its sentences.

Maugham was in his early thirties when he scored his success on the London West End. He became a newspaper success-story, was lionized, and thought of writing for the stage exclusively. He was beginning to become "obsessed," however, with the cumulative impressions of his personal history and he now began work on the best known of his novels, *Of Human Bondage.* Into this large and, for Maugham artlessly personal book, went his unhappy childhood and much of the rest of his life, covered over with a slight gloss of fiction. The portrait of Philip Carey—"a quiet, shy, small boy"—was that of Maugham himself, with the author's stammer replaced by Carey's clubfoot. Yet *Of Human Bondage,* in spite of its reputation, is not typical of Maugham's best work in either its unrelieved tone, its direct autobiographical source, or its uncharacteristic length. Unlike Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh,* with which it was once compared, there is no indignation at the clerical hypocrisy which it treats, but only surgical distaste, with Maugham's cool eye turned on a scene of pathetic dreariness. By his own word Maugham wrote the novel to rid himself of the burden of his past experience, and the strict fidelity of the

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telling shows in the novel's almost embarrassing masochism when compared with his later work. Characteristically, Maugham can stand outside of his tales and accurately gauge their effectiveness while he is creating the life within; but in this novel, where the purpose of writing was complete purgation, the author's achievement was more important to his contemporaries than to a reader of the 1950's.

MAUGHAM was never to write another book like *Of Human Bondage*. With the years his experience was to become his personality, his personality was to become inseparable from his wisdom, and combined they were to find merely vain or juvenile any literary expression which was not considerate of others. The contrast between *Of Human Bondage* and *The Summing Up*, the book which is closest to it, although not fiction, is a test of this change of attitude. In the twenty-three years which lay between the two books one sees how in writing about his own life Maugham has become laconic instead of verbose, his omissions in 1938 are more significant than his "confession" of 1915. *The Summing Up* is a volume to which one returns with pleasure, while *Of Human Bondage*, despite its gripping characterizations, has become something of a period piece. In a world where books no less than men compete for survival it seems highly unlikely to me that *Of Human Bondage* will outlive its author.

After publishing this novel Maugham began the second and richest half of his career. Approximately forty when the first world war began, he enlisted immediately; broad in personal sympathies but never a moral radical—one need only compare his uncritically patriotic behavior to that of G. B. Shaw or D. H. Lawrence during the war—Maugham served at first as a doctor attached to an ambulance unit in France, then as a British spy in Switzerland (which he writes about in *Ashenden, or The British Agent*, a dry-wine account of what it is like to be a spy, with Maugham quietly relishing the disparity between actual and fictional spying all the way through the book). After bad health sent Maugham temporarily out of the British Intelligence service and on a recuperative voyage to the South Seas, where he collected material for *The Moon and Sixpence*, he headed an abortive mission to Petrograd in 1917 in an attempt to keep Russia in the war and prevent the Bolsheviks from seizing power. When this mission failed—and Maugham says in *The Summing Up* that if he had arrived in Petrograd a month before he did he might have accomplished his end and thus altered history, although he expects no one to believe this—he yielded to the

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tuberculosis infection and spent the following two years in a Scottish sanatorium.

After his cure Maugham began the first of his series of long voyages to the Orient and South Pacific, which continued for more than twenty years. Out of the first of these journeys came the first of those ten thousand-word novellas like *The Letter, Rain, The Book Bag* and others; they were a new form for Maugham and one in which he was to do some of his best work. It was at the beginning of this period (exactly thirty-nine years ago) that Maugham ripened to his fullest powers and did the work which has had an extraordinary appeal for practically every kind of reader throughout the civilized world.

(*This is the first of two articles on Somerset Maugham.*)

THE STAGE

FORTUNE ON 48th STREET

MR. Horton Foote's "The Traveling Lady" and "The Rainmaker" by Mr. N. Richard Nash are the curious fruit of television: until the recent closing of Mr. Foote's drama at the Playhouse, they confronted each other across 48th Street with the solid assurance of a *fait accompli*. Both playwrights are gentlemen of commercial property who have established a sober, decent celebrity in the world of waltzing soapflakes and revolving icebox doors. Both have made previous theatrical forays beyond Rockefeller Center: Mr. Nash with two sober, decent failures, Mr. Foote with "The Chase" and last year's admirable "Trip to Bountiful." They have contributed to the ephemeral literature of television some work which, in delicacy of feeling, excels most contemporary writing for the stage; their influence has been applauded and denounced; here are their plays to give witness.

To the common opinion of "The Traveling Lady," I shall add nothing. It is a very small play, the portraiture finished, the emotional tone muted, but the structure febrile, attenuated; I had the impression of a mind numb with the collected data of pain. Mr. Foote invokes commonplaces of domestic pathos in which we are all implicated; he does nothing with them, however—leaves them thick and sluggish in the texture of the play. But since "The Traveling Lady" precedes "The Trip to Bountiful" in time of composition, we are not free to read in its relative inferiority any decline of Mr. Foote's very considerable gifts. I would question, however, the wisdom of the Playwrights' Company in continuing to exhume these early exercises of our more promising younger talents (Mr. Robert Anderson was the last melancholy instance, and under the same producers' banner): the effect

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is surely to diminish the weight of reputation, and even to challenge the actual existence of ability. In the title role of Mr. Foote's play, Miss Kim Stanley gave a touching performance in a minor vein of American theatrical realism—though again my quarrel is with the producers for so capriciously raising her to stardom. However generous the gesture, however entrenched Miss Stanley's distinguished and authentic craftsmanship, what can such an early blight of responsibility do but make the young actress' path ever so much the more difficult?

"THE Rainmaker" (*at the Cort*) is altogether another affair; indeed, how Mr. Nash—entombed last year in the tedious symbolism of "See the Jaguar"—escaped to write this subtle, winning, humane comedy shall remain one of the mysteries of the resilient creative spirit. The play quite baffles one's conventional critical response: how is it possible to reconcile the presence of so much that is obviously cliché and second-hand with a nonetheless overmastering sense of something rare and original? I cannot say—will merely note that Mr. Nash has truly *imagined* his material (not just reported it). "The Rainmaker" urgently invites more than one inspection: a first visit to taste the flavor of this Western sage-brush and cactus, a second to try to fathom the exotic means by which the playwright has finely achieved it.

The performance, directed by Mr. Joseph Anthony for a point-by-point freshness, is one of the season's most rewarding. Every role has shapeliness and definition; an expert balance is struck between the latitude allowed for individual eccentricity in minor roles and our natural insistence that the major personalities be not displaced. Miss Geraldine Page and Mr. Darren McGavin show exhilarating attack in their playing Her vulnerable shyness, her disconnected nervous energy take a comic emphasis with visible success; her somewhat bleak and monochrome pathos shows to extreme advantage in this graceless Western locale—style is well married to subject. Very little on current view is so deliciously funny as Miss Page's second-act parody of coquetry, but so do her sudden accesses of feeling have their own grasping power. Mr. McGavin's confidence man is theatrically sumptuous, a rich and expressive performance, vocally and physically: this actor has positive dash and bravado. How brilliantly he incarnates Mr. Nash's most originally observed character: the man in whom charm is all, who captivates neither to connive nor corrupt but because he must live in a glow of esteem, and what to do in that case but radiate it oneself? There

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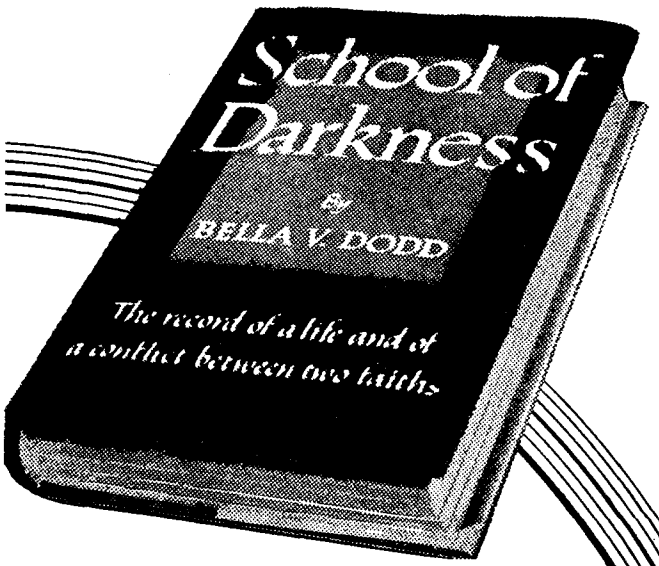

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is in him a large admixture of rhetoric and falsity, he is fickle, superficial, he deceives even (perhaps above all) himself: but much is forgiven him because, traditionally, he has loved well. We have all been moved to amusement or affection by so rare and colorfully-plumed a creature: how resist, then, the charming spectacle of Mr. McGavin bringing rain into the dry season of Miss Page's heart, or the curious, constant, raffish sentimental pleasures of Mr. Nash's haunting comedy.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

NOT WISELY BUT TOO WELL

ALTHOUGH many of Graham Greene's stories have been adapted into cinema, few of these movies, interesting though they may be, have caught the essence of Greene, the mental sweating over spiritual problems. "The Fugitive" (based on *The Power and the Glory*), "Fallen Idol," "Brighton Rock" and "This Gun for Hire" were exciting as movies, but missed the main point that Greene was making about the frailty of man. The latest try, an English film beautifully photographed in Sierra Leone, West Africa, is "The Heart of the Matter," which, except for the ending that has Scobie killed in the line of police duty just as he is about to commit suicide, sticks pretty closely to Greene.

That very fine actor, Trevor Howard, is perfectly cast as Scobie, the deputy police commissioner—"Scobie, the Just," the sensitive man who cannot stand seeing his fellows suffer. Driven by an overpowering desire to make people happy, he gets himself so involved in the lives of those he tries to help that he can find no way out of the maze. He pities his wife (Elizabeth Allan) but thinks he cannot give up the young widow (Maria Schell) whom he loves and who is so dependent on him in her loneliness. To please his wife, he receives Communion although he has been denied Absolution. He is blackmailed by an evil diamond smuggler who threatens his job. Everything closes in on him at once. In despair, but fully realizing the seriousness of the sin, he decides on suicide so he will stop hurting people.

Obviously "The Heart of the Matter" is not a pretty picture, but it is one of the most thought-provoking movies I have ever seen. George More O'Ferrall has directed the good cast (which also includes Peter Einch, Denholm Elliott, Gerard Oury, George Coulouris) in a series of striking character portrayals, but neither he nor Ian Dalrymple, who wrote the

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script, went out of their way to make this fascinating picture easy for the viewer. Moviegoers, unfamiliar with Greene's novel or with Catholic teaching, may find themselves lost at times during the development of this story. For moviegoers who are willing to concentrate on one of the most stimulating films of the year, "The Heart of the Matter" is richly rewarding.

NO one will have to concentrate particularly while "Desiree" is running its handsome course. The film made from Annemarie Selinko's novel is an elegant pageant spread across a wide CinemaScope screen, decorated with beautiful costumes and sets in De Luxe color and enlivened from time to time when Jean Simmons as the heroine reads from Desiree's diary. Daniel Taradash did a remarkable job in confining this lengthy book into a literate screenplay. If any objection to the picture can be found it is in that the pageant of the Napoleonic period is so striking that one loses any intimate contact with the characters.

Jean Simmons is lovely in the title role, and if the picture allows her little opportunity to display her acting talent, it does allow her to look attractive and age gracefully during the twenty years covered by the story during which she grows from the romantic young girl engaged to Napoleon into the mature wife of Bernadotte and mother of Oscar I of Sweden. Michael Rennie gives the film's warmest portrayal as Bernadotte. It is a new and subdued Marlon Brando who plays Napoleon—or almost underplays him—in a manner that is quite effective.

Although Brando dominates, as would Napoleon, practically every scene he's in, Director Henry Koster wisely lets the spectacle get the upper hand in the beautiful coronation scene and gives Merle Oberon as Josephine her big moment during the sequence in which Napoleon dissolves their marriage. Bernadotte gets his impressive scene too—in his last row with Napoleon when the question is raised which of the two men has been the more illustrious traitor to France. Perhaps "Desiree" aims to be little more than a good historical romance. What with its fine cast and decorations, it is a superb example of the genre.

GEORGE Raft plays the wise detective in "Black Widow," a murder-mystery that never rises much above the whodunit class in spite of its elaborate CinemaScope width, De Luxe Color and star-studded cast (including Van Heflin, Gene Tierney, Ginger Rogers, and Reginald Gardiner). Although Nunnally Johnson, who produced this picture, directed it and wrote the screenplay from a story by Patrick Quentin, is an astute movie maker, he gets off to a slow start. Details are piled on details at the beginning and you

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have to pay attention because they all matter later, but by that time you don't care very much.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"NUCLEAR WAR"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: . . . Your discussion [of nuclear war in a series of editorials—Oct. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, & Nov. 12] is clearer and saner than most—there is something despairing about the secrecy and superficiality of official utterances on the subject—and the conclusion seems to me compelling.

It is a problem which seems insoluble. As you well indicate, against every one of the sweeping, logical solutions—from total retaliation to total disarmament—insuperable objections arise. That virtually forces one back into the areas of the uncertain, the not precisely predictable or logically demonstrable, out of which in fact most historic solutions have sprung. The possibility of limiting the use of the weapons becomes, to me, the most hopeful of all just because it is perhaps the hardest to reduce to a formula.

I confess it is difficult for me to see how the weapons, if they are used at all, can be confined to limited targets; but if American policy were consciously and earnestly based on securing maximum limitation, the chances that they would never be used again would be considerably better than they are now. American policy-makers and spokesmen are still blinding themselves to what seems to be the fact: that once these weapons with carriers become available in substantially comparable numbers to both sides, they become completely useless to serve any purpose of warfare, whether tactical, "strategic" or the political kind expected to be attained by terrorization and population bombing. The weapons hold out no advantage in either offense or defense which will not be more than neutralized by the weapons in the hands of the enemy. Their one practical value is as a means whereby each side can prevent their use by the other.

If this fact had been clearly grasped here in the autumn of 1949 (when the first Soviet bomb was exploded) our actual military plans, in terms of numbers of weapons and carriers, might not be very different from what they are today. But we would surely be lot farther along the road toward military-political policies which would permit these instruments to serve mankind and not merely destroy it. Instead, there was headlong flight into the folly of a "bigger bang for a buck" and Secretary Dulles's misleading hints that the *threat* of the weapons could achieve diplomatic and political results in current international relations which the weapons themselves could never achieve and for which they should never be employed. . . .

WALTER MILLIS.

"CORE OF THE CURRICULUM"

Budleigh Salterton, Devon

TO the Editors: In reply to Mr. Edward J. Tully's letter in your issue of October 15th, I would say that the relation between religion and culture is the same as that between faith and life. As a living faith must change the life of the believer, so a living religion must influence and transform the social way of life, that is to say the culture.

We cannot separate culture from religion, any more than we can separate our life from our faith. It is impossible to be a Christian in church and a secularist or a pagan outside. Even a Christian minority, which lives a hidden and persecuted life—like the early Christians in the age of the catacombs—possesses its own patterns of life and thought which are the seeds of a new culture.

With all deference to Mr. Tully, I do not think that P. P. Ricci and Verbiest attempted to "dissociate Christianity from Christian culture." What they were trying to do was a very different thing: to associate Christianity with Chinese culture and thus add a new province to the universal culture of Catholic Christendom.

With regard to Dr. Toynbee's views, I have pointed out in my recent article on his volumes, that he is no longer a cultural relativist. He has accepted the principle of the qualitative difference between cultures and now ranks them according to the degree in which they embody the spiritual values and subserve the ends of the higher religions.

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON.

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An Artist's Vision of the Goodness of All That Is

THE POETIC DRAMA OF PAUL CLAUDEL. By Joseph Chiari. Kenedy. $3.75.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

THE poet, more than any other artist, is not only set in his time, but wrung from it, distilled by it. From the April anger of Langland, to the damp sprouting of Eliot's housemaids, England's social, economic, constitutional and political history is reflected in and by her kaleidoscopic poets. And the temporality of the poet is doubled when he is also a dramatist—Shakespeare is as essentially a Renaissance man as Swinburne is a Victorian, and the plays of Robert Browning are as truly circumscribed by time and place as those of Beaumont or Fletcher. Mr. Chiari has produced a timely study of the French ninety-year-old Paul Claudel, the most neglected figure of the twentieth century Catholic literary revival, and perhaps, with the one possible exception of James Joyce, the most theological creative artist of his time.

Mr. Chiari makes a good distinction between a tragic age and a dramatic one: we are in so essentially tragic a situation that the survivors "find it difficult to accept tragedy and pathos on the stage," and prefer the "realistic or escapist atmosphere of the cinema and the ballet" or such plays as those whose dramatic tension is both sedative and surrealist. Mr. Chiari makes it clear that Claudel is above all a poet, who happens to write plays. And, because "poetry is not a state, but a crystallization of a state" poetry "is in the word, or is not." Claudel is starkly a poet, never dependent on "scenery, star-acting and incidental music." All J-L. Barrault's retreat into mime, or Maeterlinck or Auden's escape into opera, affect Claudel not at all. Indeed, he is almost a Tiresias, a prophetic reproach to today's tendency to fly from the word, to regress to pictures, whether movies, television or ballet, all of which are a return to the bison-draftsmen of the cave. For that way lies the egg-end of man.

But words, as words, are not enough. They must, as Mr. Chiari puts it, have "subterranean links with the numinous," and the 'tears of things' are always wrought by Hecuba or Helen, who must be both girl and myth, substance and shadow. (Or, as Ezra Pound once put it "girl you are, tree you are, and all this is folly to the world.") Mr. Chiari, having rightly noted that "vagueness of expression can only breed vagueness of reception" (and he is quite brilliant in his few remarks in this connection about Christopher Fry's 'glittering' verse) is almost too dogmatic himself: Claudel is for him no psychologist, is rarely a dramatist, and is less great a poet than Paul Valery, T. S. Eliot or W. B. Yeats. He contrasts, briefly, but very appositely, the Corneillian hero, with his will fixed "in a perfect supra-human clarity of vision" where "action stops" because "no movement remains worthwhile" and the Racinian hero, whose action is not important, since we are wholly concerned with the horror of his situation, separated from God, his source. What matters in Racine is the knowledge of the situation through language says Mr. Chiari. In Claudel the reader is given a Corneillian clarity of vision: he knows, all the time, and without any surprise, that evil, in so far as it exists, must be good. So the torture of Verlaine is as much a necessary part of God's glory as Mara's total sinfulness and selfishness (in *l'Annonce fait à Marie*) and Claudel spent fifty-six years not so much justifying the ways of God to man, as embroidering Wystan Auden's later statement that "for His goodness even sin is valid as a sign."

Mr. Chiari is excellent on *La Ville*, the *Repos du Septieme Jour*, and *Partage de Midi*, three of the loveliest of Claudel's plays, supremely lyrical and hopelessly undramatic. But in his analysis of *Le Soulier de Satin* he completely loses his head; indeed he literally falls head first: the one fatal position for a critic. "One might of course" he declaims "feel completely repelled by the idea of a God-Fisherman who hauls His creatures to Him with a hook in their hearts" and he goes on to say that the whole thing must appear barren to those who do not believe in God. Which is nonsense. For Paul Claudel is as great a poet, and as valid, to the Confucian as to the Catholic, and it is disastrous denigration to suggest the contrary. The point of the poet is that he is a maker and that he makes poetry. Poetry makes connections, but whether we can see or believe in the things between which it makes connections matters not at all.

Mr. Chiari, in fact, is good when he writes about Claudel; infinitely dreary when he writes about himself. When he takes pages to give his own views of time, eternity and God, the reader-reaction can only be to close the book with a so-what. Which is a pity. For, in this century that turns more and more to the abstract in painting, because everything is seen more and more structurally, Claudel's vision, of all the different levels of love and suffering in the *Soulier de Satin*, for example, is exceedingly apposite. Today a man is not merely a rational animal capable of laughter, nor body, soul and spirit, nor a collection of chemicals, nor even an army of atoms, nor a mobile of molecules, nor a bundle of complexes, but all of these at once, and many other things too, such as a skeleton and an alignment of levers, a glomerate of electrical impulses and striated tendons, flexes and reflexes, nerves and muscles. Paul Claudel in creating in his dramas perfect tensions that are never absolute struggles, helps to show today's man as he is, and as he sees himself, and even—for such is Claudel's splendid audacity—as God sees him.

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CHRISTIANITY AND WESTERN CIVILIZATION. By Carlton J. H. Hayes. Stanford University. $2.50.

By M. A. FITZSIMONS

THIS volume, containing three lectures delivered at Stanford University, presents the reflections of a great historian on several aspects of Christianity and Western civilization. Here Professor Hayes is not concerned with the philosophy of history or the sociology of culture. He has selected three aspects of the history of Europe and the Atlantic community, which reveal the operation of the Christian faith as the basis of its unique character and achievement. His subjects are fundamental ones: "Individualism and Liberty," "Plural Authority and Constitutional Government" and "Progress and Compassion."

Latin Christianity was the fulfillment of the Jewish prophetic tradition and the heir of the Greek world, which was strikingly conscious of the tensions and limits of the human condition. With Christianity the dignity of man was exalted, for man was not only rational but had free will and is redeemed by Incarnate God. This individualism is no matter of personal egotism and self-centeredness, for it is God-centered and involves the vigilant scrutiny of the conscience and the recognition of authority as a constant warning against self-deception and subjectivism. This human individuality is not limited to this life but will continue beyond the grave. Christian individualism and liberty were bases of what came to be called natural rights. No other part of the world has seen so many "rebellions against tyranny and affirmations of liberty." This principle took many historical forms in charters and declarations, and on occasion was distorted by conceptions of man which portrayed him as wholly rational and perfectible. Exaggerations of this liberty have produced Christian and unChristian forms of anarchism.

Moreover, this same spirit and the existence of the Church have fostered plural authority and constitutional government. The Gelasian formula of the two swords expresses the necessarily unremitting opposition of the Church to totalitarianism of any sort. Western history is full of struggles concerning the boundaries of the two spheres. Here, Professor Hayes denies the propriety of speaking of the union of Church and State. "Cooperation, yes; but union, that is identity or amalgamation, no." It is regrettable that the question is so often badly posed in terms of union or separation. Finally, he sketches out the progressive character of our civilization and the working of the leaven of charity in the broadening of compassion, a theme which leads him to discuss such subjects as the emancipation of slavery, labor laws, and pacifism.

The author rightly insists that his subjects are of "crucial significance" in our age. In his treatment they

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present both a question and a challenge. The question is what happens to these prized features of the Western world, when the religious faith, their source, ceases to be a paramount thing in the Western world. The challenge is the call to recognize them and the will to preserve them. With unexpected optimism he says that the Christian tradition of freedom has been so "effective that up to now every actual setback to personal liberty has been followed, sooner or later, by a fresh advance."

The scholarly modesty and clarity of a great teacher may mislead some readers who will underestimate this volume, but most, I think, will join with me in the ingratitude of the wish that it were much longer.

Pity and Fear

AGAMEMNON. By William Alfred. Knopf. $3.

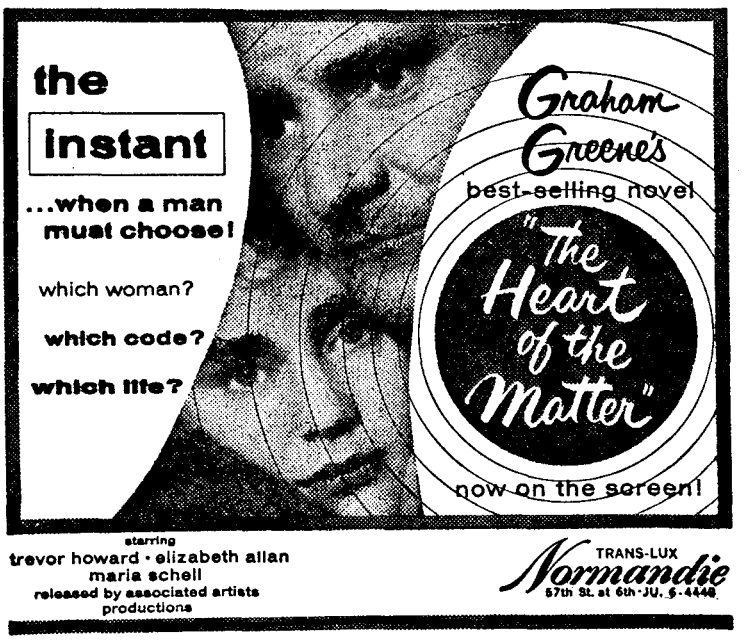
By HENRY RAGO

WILLIAM Alfred's purpose in writing this verse play in four acts is not to make an adaptation of Aeschylus; he wishes to penetrate the myth itself, that "ambush of reality," that familiar place (he goes on to say in his preface) we might find in no matter how foreign a city. Thus he would work where Aeschylus worked, and where the imaginations of his "private" readers work, whether consciously or not; and he would make his play directly from—or in?—the life of that myth, and not from its literature.

We would be speechless if he succeeded entirely, or even almost entirely. We do not expect this young poet to rival Aeschylus with his first play; and we do not expect him (though his preface says this play is "Greek by accident") to get the ring of Greek out of his ears in the making of his lines.

What is sure is that he has done a fine play, with a few moments of really high distinction. The Clytemnestra in the quarrel scene with Aegistus in the first scene of the second act is an authentic realization; there is a bite to her anger and her bitterness, and there is something in her genuinely touching. And in the last scene of the last act, the play seems to break wholly into its own kind of immediacy, in the desperate weariness of Aegon just before the murder of Agamemnon, and in the lonely anguish of Cassandra.

I would like to see what William Alfred could do with the completely



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contemporary setting: characters, atmosphere, idiom. Mr. Eliot says that it is cheating to do the verse drama in any terms *but* the contemporary; or at least that we do not have a full realization of verse drama for our times unless we meet the problem head-on. I think Mr. Eliot is right; and I do not think his statement implies any more than Mr. Alfred understands in his preface. But I suggest that the literal application of Mr. Eliot's requirements, oddly enough, might make things easier rather than harder for a poetry true to the accent of our speech and at the same time to that solemn accent beyond both English and Greek.

If these remarks sound ungrateful, it is the solid achievement and the intriguing promise of William Alfred's *Agamemnon* that inspire them. They do not seem at cross purposes with a play that finds on the tombstone of a Vermont cemetery as definitive a line as Cassandra was ever made to utter: "It is a fearful thing to love what death can touch."

Critics' Choice for Christmas

VIVIAN MERCIER

AN unusually large number of books of lasting worth have appeared this year; I *hope* to read them all eventually. Those that have not yet come my way include Toynbee's four volumes, the three volumes of Steven Runciman's *A History of the Crusades,* the *Collected Poems* of Wallace Stevens and e. e. cummings, and Franz Kafka's *Dearest Father,* containing the first complete translation of the famous autobiographical letter to his father. Among the cheap reprints and new translations of good books that I am about ready to re-read, I note J. Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* and Moses Hadas' *Three Greek Romances* (including *Daphnis and Chloe*) from Anchor, Céline's *Journey to the End of the Night* from Avon, and Thucydides and *Germinal* from Penguin. Here are my new selections:

Selected Works of Sacheverell Sitwell. Bobbs-Merrill. $4. Published late last year, this tightly-packed portmanteau did not attract the attention it deserved. I had hoped it would arouse interest in some of the extraordinary books, such as *Splendors and Miseries* and *Dance of the Quick and the Dead,* from which its contents were drawn. Indeed, *Selected Works* itself constitutes a unity worthy to rank with the great prose fantasias I have just named. There is no richer descriptive writing in English.

Waiting for Godot. By Samuel Beckett. Grove Press. $4.75. This "tragicomedy in two acts" is the first work published in America by the latest Irishman to become the darling of Paris. Originally written in French, and translated by the author, *Waiting for Godot* portrays man's search for God (or for the Ideal) in terms of vaudeville. Two rather slapstick hoboes are waiting for Godot; a certain Pozzo appears instead; is he really Godot? The second act, next evening, repeats the first with variations. Is Beckett's skepticism Pascalian or Voltairean? Is his play a gesture of blasphemy or of humility? Read it and decide for yourself—if you can.

French Stories and Tales. Selected and edited by Stanley Geist. Knopf. $3.95. Except for a weak Stendhal item and a rather obvious choice from Flaubert, this is one of the most intelligent editing jobs in years.

The Collected Poems of Oliver St. John Gogarty. Devin-Adair. $5. Padraic Colum, James Stephens, and Gogarty have all had their collected poetry published in the past two years. Of the three—the books, not the men—I put Gogarty's first. Like so many Irishmen since the arrival of Saint Patrick, he shows more affinity for Latin and Greek modes of thought than for British and German ones. A latter-day Horace, he is never a more serious artist than when he seeks our laughter or our smiles.

Son of Oscar Wilde. By Vyvyan Holland. Dutton. $3.75. Wilde's younger son writes his autobiography with a tenderness for the feelings of others that was rarely

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shown to him in his youth. The entire book is in excellent taste with hardly a hint of self-pity. It should have special interest for Commonweal readers for two reasons: (1) Mr. Holland found Christian *caritas* toward himself and his father chiefly among Catholics; (2) thirty-three new, sunny undergraduate letters by Oscar Wilde, printed in an appendix, show how early the Catholic Church first attracted him.

An Anthology of Irish Literature. Edited by David H. Greene. Modern Library. $1.45. 588 pages, plus a twenty-page introduction, give a satisfactory picture of the scope—imaginative and chronological—of Irish literature in both Gaelic and English. Only Ireland's third literary language, Latin, has been slighted. The verse selections far outnumber the prose; great pains have been taken to include the best translations; both introduction and notes are short but always illuminating.

PATRICK F. QUINN

DURING the past year I had occasion to read more than my usual quota of contemporary novels, and so I am confining my list to that category. All told, 1954 was not a good year in fiction: too many disappointments at the hands of Isherwood, Steinbeck, Faulkner, and Waugh. However, the following four items did something to redeem the time. All four are "clever" novels; none of them has much thematic richness; and I cite them as interesting books, rather than as significant or especially memorable.

Pictures From an Institution. By Randall Jarrell. Knopf. $3.50. A satire about some people on the staff of a progressive college. This is an almost professionally clever book, and sometimes very funny—especially if one can avoid the impression that in writing it Mr. Jarrell's main purpose was to roast certain individuals he dislikes.

The Bad Seed. By William March. Rinehart. $3. A psycho-thriller by an expert at narrative, this novel about a mad little murderer makes no pretense at profundity and just misses melodrama. But with two strikes against him Mr. March comes through superbly and tells an almost incredible story with remarkable skill.

The Bird's Nest. By Shirley Jackson. Farrar, Straus & Young. $3.50. The attraction of this book is also twofold: a fantastic situation sets the plot going, and the author's narrative know-how keeps us interested to the end. Miss Jackson needs all the cunning she can (and

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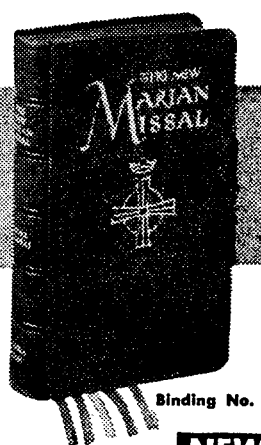

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does) command, for her story concerns the misadventures of a young lady who comes up with a case of quadruple personality. A bizarre and brilliant performance.

The Huge Season. By Wright Morris. Viking. $3.75. Here is another tricky production. As we follow Mr. Morris's characters we move back and forth between the atomic age and the jazz era. No major insight results from these juxtapositions of "now" and "then," but there is so much verve to Mr. Morris's writing, and so many good details all through the book, that we scarcely mind the deficiency in substance.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

THIS year I think that my list indicates, in addition to personal taste, several trends in publishing. The first is the flourishing of medium-priced (95¢ to $2) reprints. Anchor Books have been followed by Vintage, Image; others are in the offing. On the whole this has been an area of responsible publishing. Another factor is the growing institutionalization of the rebels. Those who, like Wallace Stevens, were once in the radical vanguard of contemporary literature are now established enough for Collected Works—and doctoral dissertations. Dylan Thomas has gone through an immediate immortalization and has become mythic to a disturbing degree. But the best news is still the proliferation of good books at low prices even though this has taken place at the cost of a mountain of trash. Here are my individual choices:

A Fable. By William Faulkner. Random House. $4.75. None of the reviews of this book satisfied me. It is far more complex than was generally realized, and I think that time will show that it is essential to the understanding of Faulkner as a whole. More pertinently, I found *A Fable* an exciting experience.

The American Political Tradition. By Richard Hofstadter. Vintage. 95¢. A book which puts us in the gratitude of the soft-cover reprint houses, this one by Vintage. Hofstadter's study is the most fascinating essay on American politics that I have read in a long, long time.

Mimesis. By Erich Auerbach. Princeton. $7.50. This book was ignored by far too many of the magazines. It is a study of the representation of reality in Western literature, ranging from the Odyssey to Virginia Woolf. Auerbach has a new-critical talent for close textual analysis, but he combines it with a historical sweep which the explicators so often lack.

Collected Poems. By Wallace Stevens. Knopf. $6.75. Stevens is one of our best poets. Unfortunately his reputation has been burdened with epithets of cuteness, rhetoric, and the like. This volume should remedy this situation. Poems like "Ideas of Order" are among the finest in contemporary literature.

The Rebel. By Albert Camus. Knopf. $4. My only complaint here is that the American translation omitted some of the original. Otherwise, Camus' "ideological history" is one of the most important events in the recent intellectual development of Europe.

RICHARD HAYES

The Go-Between. By L. P. Hartley. Knopf. $3.50.

The Sleeping Beauty. By Elizabeth Taylor. Viking. $3.

Studies in Classic American Literature. By D. H. Lawrence. Anchor. 65¢.

The Complex Fate. By Marius Bewley. Grove Press. $5.

The Dramatic Event. By Eric Bentley. Horizon Press. $3.50.

AGAIN, a personal selection from a limited reading-year. Mr. Hartley's novel, particularly in its framing of action, its deployment of subsidiary themes, has some of the resonance and "grand line" of great Victorian fiction; Mrs. Taylor's is a witty, sculptured book, faultless in its exploration of civilized human relationships, by a writer taking on depth and richness every year. For all its strident, nervous energy, the constant harrowing about "passional readjustments" and "the Holy Ghost within," Lawrence's neglected master-

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piece struck me with the force of genius: at once celebration, arraignment, inquest of the American experience, it exhilarates and terrifies with its apocalyptic truth. Mr. Marius Bewley balances the eccentricities of so personal a book with another view of the national literary past. Exquisitely poised, diligent in inquiry, perspicacious in insight, *The Complex Fate* saliently places the "great tradition" in American fiction: a most original departure by an audacious native talent. Finally, *The Dramatic Event* collates the various exercises of Mr. Bentley as practical critic. I am professionally indebted to these notices, consistently, indeed, humbled by them. Yet their interest is neither exclusive nor parochial: they present an inviolate critical intelligence spiritedly engaged with the resistant facts of (generally) culture and life, and (specifically) theater. It is not necessary to acquiesce in all the opinions Mr. Bentley submits, but what must be honored is the energy, passion, even—I will say—the power of his performance.

PHILIP BURNHAM

THE invitation to pick out half a dozen books of the year sends me scurrying to the shelves to see what I've put off reading or have altogether missed. But on the "unread shelf" are too many possibilities to cover now in time. Especially novels: what 1954 novels should one have read and taken to heart and advocated? There ought to be novels in this list, and are not.

The Web of Subversion. By James Burnham, John Day. $3.75. The first selection comes easy. The author tells with a minimum (or else, excellently controlled) passion, and with a maximum of digested documentation, what the shooting is about in one of our major interior wars. Burnham is good, and the account is frigidly fascinating.

Born Catholics. Assembled by F. J. Sheed. Sheed & Ward. $3.50. The second choice is also simple to make (on the basis of relationship and genuine regard). Mr. Sheed's good and witty idea of complement-

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ing all those literate converts became, because of the extraordinary quality of the twenty "native" writers, an intelligent, engaging and unusually aware insight into the contemporary consciousness of the Faith.

The Third Revolution. By Karl Stern. Harcourt, Brace. $4. Karl Stern is a wonderful writer with extraordinarily good English style, although he was born and educated in Germany and is a writer by avocation. His character and writing are of the rare kind that brings reader and writer and subject matter into contact without insulation. The writer creates no structures or effects or barriers, but leads the reader into confident companionship and association. Under his persuasion and sensitive influence we actively examine along with him, and we observe sympathetically, intelligently and charitably the development of psychiatry in its living historical and personal circumstances. The subtitle of the book is "Psychiatry and Religion," but, more generally, our personalities seem to be expanded to meet different and new things with a human and properly Christian sincere regard.

The End of Time. By Josef Pieper. Pantheon. $2.75. This short "meditation on the philosophy of history" puts some realistic Christian boundaries and directions to the increasingly popular and free-wheeling philosophizing, interpreting and schematizing of history. It may be rather stiff reading, but always lucid. I am doubly grateful to the book because it led to reading the author's most rich *Leisure—The Basis of Culture,* and his *Fortitude and Temperance,* which one and two years back were, in Philistine fashion, left on that "unread" shelf.

The Western Fathers. Translated and edited by F. R. Hoare. Sheed & Ward. $4. I reluctantly select this entrancing work—the first of a library, "The Makers of Christendom," to be published under Christopher Dawson's general editorship—before Dawson's own *Medieval Essays.* Most of the latter appeared in other books far easier to come by than the ancient stories of these saints. In *The Western Fathers* you can see and feel the Christian spirit powerful enough to create civilizations from practically scratch; and, even more, strong enough to convert men to heaven.

The Love Letters of Phyllis McGinley. Viking. $3. How good (and rare) it is to read good light current verse. An expert takes up thoughts and impressions, reflections from the plain and common experiences of the quite contemporary city world, and gives them form and focus. The "Love Letters" are satires, I suppose. Contradictorily, however, these satires add to the precisely observed fact that warmth and sympathy and pardon which satire generally cuts away. The verses to the saints (a fine dozen of the poems) display the flat New Yorkese tolerance and impartiality carried to the goal of humility, and to admiring, faithful appreciation.

M. A. FITZSIMONS

MY readings have been mainly historical and political. The political books were as a rule not of a very high order and evoked criticism of a better quality than that of the books themselves. Many highly praised novels proved very disappointing, though I did greatly enjoy Pamela Frankau's *A Wreath for the Enemy.* In no particular order, here are the books of the year which interested me.

The Hedgehog and the Fox. By Isaiah Berlin. Simon and Schuster. $2.50. This little volume, a study of Tolstoy and his philosophy of history, is wholly delightful in its reflections on the kinds of men and writers, political and historical philosophy and literature. A reading of it should surely cause a reading or rereading of *War and Peace.*

A Study of History. By A. J. Toynbee. Vols. 7-10. Oxford. $35. The completion of Toynbee's study marks a great intellectual achievement of the century. Toynbee's wide and general learning and view are an affront to some academic scholars but he has posed problems and problematic answers that will concern them for a long time. In spite of his immanentism I have found few books more exciting and fewer

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A New Testament Commentary for English Readers, Vol. II. By Ronald A. Knox. Sheed & Ward. $3.75. Monsignor Knox has not only written the most readable translation of the New Testament but has performed the equally difficult, though related, task of writing an engrossing and valuable commentary.

Victorian England: Portrait of an Age. By E. M. Young. Anchor. 95¢. This volume warrants place in this year's selections only as a reprint. It is one of the treasures of modern scholarship, a model of subtle and imaginative social and intellectual history.

The Reformation in England, Vol. II. By Philip Hughes. Macmillan. $7.50. Here, as in his *History of the Church,* Father Hughes reveals his great powers of synthesis. In these volumes (the third has been published by Hollis and Carter) he has used new source material and in telling a painful story displays great critical powers and an exhilarating scholarly honesty.

The End of Time. By Josef Pieper. Pantheon. $2.75. A clear and masterful consideration of the philosophy of history, which presupposes theology in dealing with the beginning and end of historical development. This association of philosophy and theology does not make philosophizing easier but renders the nature of reality more accessible and its mysteriousness "more compellingly manifest." A profound work in brief compass, a work full of unforgettable passages on the end of time, nihilism and the Anti-Christ.

JOHN F. SULLIVAN

AN uncommonly large part of my reading this year has consisted of tedious tracts that were once heavy artillery in long-forgotten political battles but are now harmlessly moldering away on microfilm. (There are occasional bright exceptions: one such was Robert Southwell's *An Humble Supplication to Her Maiestie,* edited

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and provided with an excellent introduction by R. C. Bald, which the Cambridge University Press published last year.) However, I have stolen time from these researches now and then to gaze, at least, upon the presses' annual spate, and from the books which have come to my notice, the following (which are in no particular order) stand out in my memory:

Museum Pieces. By William Plomer. Noonday Press. $3.50. No monumental achievement, this novel may yet outlast much of the marble in contemporary fiction. It has been long since I have found anything so thoroughly a delight.

Major British Writers. G. B. Harrison, General Editor. Harcourt Brace. $12.50. This is an accomplishment far and above the call of duty for textbooks. Seventeen of the most indisputably major writers are present in generous selections, but the real triumph of this two-volume set is the editorial labor and introductory essays contributed by Professor Harrison and thirteen of his critical and scholarly peers. More than C. S. Lewis on Spenser, Basil Willey on Donne, Douglas Bush on Milton, Lionel Trilling on Arnold, or Elizabeth Drew on Eliot, what could you wish?

The Visionary Novels of George Macdonald. Edited by Anne Fremantle. Noonday Press. $5. At least one of the novels here so opportunely rescued from wholly undeserved oblivion is a masterpiece of the basic story-telling art. But it is more than a mere story, as, of course, are all great stories.

Mary Tudor. By H. F. M. Prescott. Macmillan. $5. I'm not sure that this book qualifies precisely for a 1954 list (it is a revised version of her 1940 *Spanish Tudor*), but I should like to include it as a superlative model for biography, just as her historical novel, *The Man on a Donkey*, was a model in its genre.

The Teacher in America. By Jacques Barzun. Anchor. 85¢. I suppose I cheat a bit to include this book, originally published in 1945, because it was republished this year in Anchor Books. But I think it is an excellent example of the wonderful kind of thing that is to be found in this series—nearly all of them books that ought to be read again in every year.

ALBAN BAER

THE actual number of books published in 1953-4 of permanent value must be small, and we cannot really know what they are for many years hence. Anyhow, here are five books published or reprinted in the last year which strike me as adding some small contribution to human knowledge and understanding. Even though I have often disagreed with much that they contain—and it will be seen from some of their titles and authors that some disagreement would be inevitable—I have just as often had fresh insights, and always I have had stimulation and pleasure.

Agape and Eros. By Anders Nygren. S.P.C.K. This is a magnificent book on a magnificent theme. Dr. Nygren, the Protestant Bishop of Lund, examines the idea of Christian love in its two main lines of development: the eros motif, descending from Plato; and the agape motif, having its classical statement in the New Testament. He shows how now one, now the other, predominated in Christian theology; and how the two together reached their greatest synthesis in Augustine. That he wrongly concludes against this synthesis and returns to the one-sided emphasis of Luther should not blind us to the deep merits of his lucid and penetrating study.

Life and Work of Sigmund Freud. By Ernest Jones. Basic Books. $6.75. There is disagreement about the beneficial or harmful influence of Freud; but no one can deny his importance. Dr. Jones has both the affection of a pupil and the severity of a critic. This, the first of a three-volume Life, deals with Freud's adolescence, his career as a neurologist, and his first gropings at a theory of psychoanalysis. A clear picture is given of emerging greatness.

The English Epic and its Background. By E. M. W. Tillyard. Oxford. $5. In this recent and spacious study, the Master of Jesus

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College, Cambridge, suggests the indispensable qualities of the epic writer—high seriousness, power to organize and to put forth a sustained effort, and capacity to be a spokesman for his age; and so suggests, most pertinently, why no epic writer has emerged in the present age. Of special interest to readers of The Commonweal is his illuminating dissection of *Piers Plowman*.

The Way. By Joseph Mary Escrivá. Scepter. $2.25. The founder and President General of the *Opus Dei*, the first of the Church's secular institutes, here sets forth his spiritual doctrine in a series of 999 succinct reflections, every one of which is admirably suited for a meditation in itself. There is a freshness about these short utterances, unfortunately absent from too many devotional books, that suggests Pascal. No book more skillfully challenges the complacency of modern man.

ANNE FREMANTLE

THE Third Revolution. By Karl Stern. Harcourt, Brace. $4. Only the true expert can make easy the subject he truly knows, and even an idiot about science (like myself) can understand Dr. Stern's magnificently clear analysis of the Third Revolution—that accomplished by Freud (the first two were Darwin's and Marx's, or the French and the U.S. or what you will). To learn is to live, and I learnt more from Dr. Stern's book than from any other I read this year.

St. Bridget of Sweden. By Johannes Jorgensen. Longmans. $8.50. This is one of the really perfect biographies, which unite author and subject so that the reader feels he is riding a centaur. And Saint Bridget is a splendidly great woman, wife, queen, mother, good at all her jobs, vital to the last day and the last page of her long life and this long book.

Pictures from an Institution. By Randall Jarrell. Knopf. $3.50. This is one of the wittiest accounts of a university, and one of the most romantic and poetic descriptions of an American institution, imaginable: it combines the humor of Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson* with the

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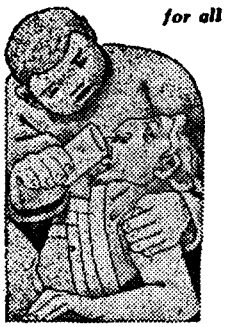

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nostalgia of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. And yet is supremely and enchantingly original.

The Love Letters of Phyllis McGinley. Viking. $3. Everyone who has ever read The Commonweal knows I am a devotee, rooter, fan, bobbysockser and flame of Miss McGinley's from way back. I love her true seriousness and her equally true wit, and I love to see anyone doing two things as well as Miss McGinley lives and writes verse. (Three I suppose really, for quite obviously, she loves at least as well as she lives and writes.)

WILL HERBERG

THE books that one remembers as those that have made the deepest impression in the course of a year's reading will naturally reflect one's intellectual interests, concerns, and predilections. I have, in recent years, been concerned mostly with theology, philosophy, religious sociology, and political thought, and the direction of my reading has in large part been determined by these concerns. Nevertheless, the five books I particularly remember seem to me to be really significant works of insight and imagination.

Christian Realism and Political Problems. By Reinhold Niebuhr. Scribners. $3. In these essays, Reinhold Niebuhr brilliantly deploys the resources of a responsible Christian realism in dealing with the urgent historical problems of our time as these problems are shaped by the "absolute" challenge of Communist totalitarianism. (In the parallel volume, *Christianity and Power Politics,* published in 1940, it was the menace of Nazism that formed the point of approach.) The concluding essay in the present volume, "Coherence, Incoherence, and Christian Faith," constitutes a welcome systematic presentation of the complex philosophical dialectic underlying much of Dr. Niebuhr's thought.

The Mind of Kierkegaard. By James Collins. Regnery. $4.50. Following up his noteworthy book, *The Existentialists,* Collins here presents a profound study of Kierkegaard as "religious philosopher" against the background of the currents of thought of his time. The detailed exposition of the structure and direction of S.K.'s thought is quite first rate, within its own terms the best I have yet come across.

The Hedgehog and the Fox. By Isaiah Berlin. Simon and Schuster. $2.50. What sets out as a study of Tolstoy's view of history as that is displayed in *War and Peace* soon becomes a brilliant inquiry into the multidimensional texture of historical existence and into the "order which, as it were, 'contains' and determines the structure of experience. . . ." Most striking is the inner relation revealed between Tolstoy's thinking and the thinking of a man so utterly different in every way as Joseph de Maistre.

The Social Sources of Denominationalism. By H. Richard Niebuhr. Shoe String Press (Hamden, Conn.). $5. A reissue, after twenty-five years, of a classic work in American religious sociology. The author traces with deep sociological insight and religious understanding the impact of social, economic, ethnic, and historical factors on the development of Protestant denominationalism in the United States. The work is still as fresh and relevant as ever.

A Program for Conservatives. By Russell Kirk. Regnery. $4. The author continues his exploration of the "new conservatism," which turns out to be something very different indeed from the so-called "conservatism" of the American business community, but not too different from a certain kind of "liberalism." Mr. Kirk, with real insight, hails Reinhold Niebuhr as the exponent of a "forthright social conservatism," the kind of conservatism he champions.

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

AS a political journalist writing daily from Washington and trying to write a book of my own on the side, most of the books I have read during 1954 were incidental to my work or were sent me for review, and not part of any coherent plan of my own. I also discover, in looking them over, that

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many of the books I have read are pretty dubious items, such as the three on Senator McCarthy—which I would just as soon forget, along with their subject. The best novels I read this year were old ones—Conrad's *Secret Agent* and Trollope's *Phineas Finn.* The following are a few new books, read this year, which I can recommend:

Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal. By Frank Friedel. Little, Brown. $6. This second volume in a prospective six-volume biography covers the period 1918-28. Compact, perceptive, and well-written, it is, together with its predecessor, *The Apprenticeship,* an example of scholarly biography at its best.

Courts of Memory. By Frank Rooney. Vanguard. $3.95. A brilliant tragic novel in the F. Scott Fitzgerald tradition. Its dialogue, dramatic power, and characterization are remarkably effective.

The Manner Is Ordinary. By John LaFarge. Harcourt, Brace. $4.75. Father LaFarge's autobiography tells the story of an extraordinarily diverse and useful life. This book demonstrates the amount of good an able man can accomplish in his lifetime, and it gives an unusually good sense of the character and "feel" of Catholic activity in this country. Ably written with good humor and grace, it is a significant contribution to the history of American Catholicism in the last fifty years.

Call to Greatness. By Adlai E. Stevenson. Harper. $2.25. A wise and thoughtful book on our role in world affairs. Interesting too, because of the window it affords on the mind of one of the most impressive men in our public life.

The Life of John Maynard Keynes. By R. F. Harrod. Macmillan. $6. An excellent biography of a fascinating and important man. The material on economics is, I am delighted to say, intelligible to a layman.

NICHOLAS JOOST

TO anybody who really likes to read, each year has its triumphs. The trouble, annually, is to decide which half-dozen books

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one has *liked,* at the expense of all the others one has read—and liked. The following constitute my modest sacrifice on the altar of *belles lettres.* With three demurs: I wanted to mention that wonderful poet Léonie Adams, but I have not been able to procure her *Collected Poems* for the necessary bibliographical data; and space alone precludes my listing Wallace Stevens and Harry Duncan.

The Living Room. By Graham Greene. Viking. $2.50. Although Mr. Greene is a special taste, I found this play moving, and true to faith and experience.

The Woman Within. By Ellen Glasgow. Harcourt, Brace. $5. Despite her avowals, these memoirs do not give us the factual truth about Ellen Glasgow's life. More importantly, we are given the grim privilege of reading a soul's odyssey through torment—or, if you will, seven decades of life. This is the finest extant portrait of the terrifying effects of American-Southern Calvinism on an artist's growing mind. It explains so much about the South—its violence, its ingrown passion, its mindlessness that seeks refuge in a squashy "liberalism," its beauty, its stoic melancholy. Also it explains, as much as such books can, Ellen Glasgow's art.

Memoirs of Hadrian. By Marguerite Yourcenar. Farrar, Straus & Young. $4. Despite its faults, which are those of any *tour de force,* this novel transcends its genre and becomes a permanent accomplishment. I became interested in Hadrian rather than in his period; the decor added glamor, but the Emperor was the novel.

The Fables of La Fontaine. By Marianne Moore. Viking. $5. Conscientiousness, wit, native charm, and technical proficiency: such are the virtues of Miss Moore's translation. It is poetry to return to, of an evening, and to read to the children, of whatever age.

Five Plays. By Edmund Wilson. Farrar, Straus & Young. $6.50. Much that can be wrong with Mr. Wilson is wrong: he's an infidel, his books cost too much money, his plays are unproducible, he's splenetic and crotchety (especially where Catholics come into the picture). Also, he's the most distinguished American playwright of ideas and a stylist to rank with Faulkner and Hemingway, and *Cyprian's Prayer* is worth several dozen Teahouses and Sympathies. His versatility—*and* his excellence—are peculiarly Drydenian.

The Desert Music. By William Carlos Williams. Random House. $2.75. Dr. Williams continues to defy some "rules"—and to write some of the purest poems. To Whitman and the Imagists, Dr. Williams adds a catalyst—himself—and the resultant art has virility, delicacy, and American beauty.

JOHN A. LUKACS

I AM a Conservative. During 1954 I was heartened to see a cautious surge of Conservative thinking in America. Yet it is peculiar to observe how belated, compromised, neglected and, worst of all, misunderstood were the most eminent Conservative books of the year. For example, it is strange that *A Program for Conservatives,* by Russell Kirk, [Regnery, $4], and *The Age of Conformity,* by Alan Valentine, [Regnery, $3] were published by a firm whose program seems dedicated to furthering the new American radical movement which, somewhat inadequately, goes by the name of McCarthyism.

It is also strange to observe that in this year, when books on foreign policy written by members of our two dominant schools of political thought—our Pocket Machiavellians and our Global Saviors—were sliding off the major presses of the country almost weekly, the short and masterly survey of diplomatic method by the most eminent authority of our day, *The Evolution of Diplomatic Method,* by Sir Harold Nicholson, has not yet found an American publisher.

I think that all those who find delight in good writing and in the debunking of scientific stupidities should rejoice in the first American translation of Flaubert's immortal castigation of mass philistinism and of mass democracy, *Bouvard and Pecuchet* — and this despite Mr. Lionel Trilling's laborious efforts in his Introduction to convince his readers, and himself, that Flaubert, really, didn't mean all that he said about bourgeois democracy. [New Directions, $3.75.]

My last recommendation is that of a book of drawings, *The Passport,* by Steinberg [Harper, $5].

May I ask my readers not to consider these exercises in superb craftsmanship and vision as "cartoons"? In the sad Jewish wit of Steinberg there gleams now, toward the end of the Age of Reason, the same complete merger of the tragic and great with the comic and low that crackled under Cervantes' pen when he wrote *Don Quixote* at the beginning of the same Age, the illusions of which his passionate, Spanish-Jewish eye already perceived as foolish.

CRITICS

Henry Rago, a poet and critic, is professor of Humanities at St. Xavier College in Chicago.

Vivian Mercier is a member of the faculty of the City College of New York.

Patrick F. Quinn, a member of the faculty of Wellesley College, contributes to the *Hudson Review,* the *Sewanee Review,* and other publications.

Michael Harrington, a frequent contributor to The Commonweal is associated with the Fund for the Republic.

Richard Hayes is the drama critic of this magazine.

Philip Burnham is a contributing editor of The Commonweal.

M. A. Fitzsimons, a member of the history department at Notre Dame, is an editor of the *Review of Politics.*

John F. Sullivan is a member of the English faculty at the University of Detroit.

Dom Alban Baer, O.S.B., is a monk of Portsmouth Priory in Rhode Island.

Anne Fremantle, a contributing editor of this magazine, has recently edited *The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald* for Noonday Press.

Will Herberg is the author of *Judaism and Modern Man.*

William V. Shannon is Washington correspondent for the New York *Post.*

Nicholas Joost teaches at Assumption College in Massachusetts and is an editor of *Poetry* magazine.

John A. Lukacs is the author of *The Great Powers and Eastern Europe,* a study in diplomatic history published last year.

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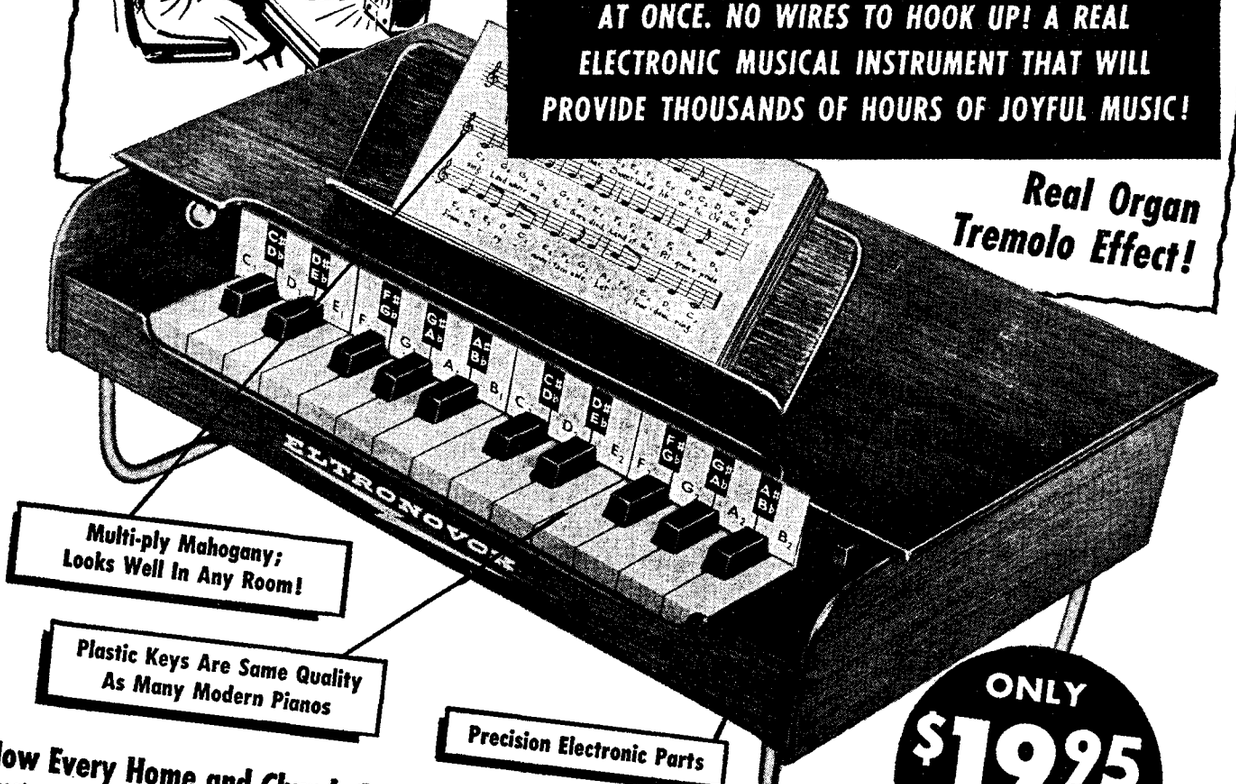

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